لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

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Aman 1355—March 1976

EDITOR
M. G. AHMAD

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in 1835 at Qadian, a village in India. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of World Reformer to combat the current of religious philosophies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the fiction of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call off their hope for a second visitfrom Christ as he had been gathered to his forefathersand barred like all mortals from coming back to the world, and that he had come instead as the Promised Messiah.

The Promised Messiah initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement to revive faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter, by means of His signs, to re-establish the glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellences of the teachings of the Holy Quran, to wean men from war-like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes, to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of Muslims and all the depressed races and nations of the world, to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers, and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences of their evil ways, to collectunder one banner all the true followers of Islam and lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, good will and selfless fellow-service and a feeling of true brotherhood

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The Promised Messiah passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion, Hazrat Hafiz Haji Hakim Maulvi Noor ud-Din as Khalifa-tul Masih I. After his death in 1914, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, was chosen as Khalifa-tul Masih II. During his 52-year long leadership, the Khalifa-tul Masih II organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965, the electoral college named with one accord, Sahibzada Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Promised Messiah's grandson, Khalifa-tul Masih III.

For further information about the Movement, its activities, aims, objectives and literature, enquires may be addressed to the earest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to :

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Secretary,
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Tahrik-i-Jadid, Rabwah, Pakistan.

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This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents true Islam. It deals with religious, ethical social and economic questions, Islamic mysticism and current topics. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is open to all for discussing problems vital to the religious and spiritual welfare of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles received by the Editor, nor does it accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

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FOUNDER OF THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

A Short Biographical Sketch

— IV —

By the late Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad M.A.

Another Criminal Case against the Promised Messiah

We have already referred to the false case of conspiracy to murder lodged by Dr. Martin Clark against the Promised Messiah in 1907 with the full backing of some non-Ahmadi Muslims and Arya Samajist Hindus. The failure of this case had greatly inflamed His opponents. In 1899 Maulvi Muhammad Hussain started another case against him alleging that since his life was in danger the Promised Messiah should be bound down to keep the peace or should be put under arrest. One Sheikh Muhammad Bakhsh happened to be at that time Police Officer incharge of the Batala Police Station. This officer was openly hostile to the Promised Messiah. This fact greatly encouraged Maulvi Muhammad Hussain in making this complaint as cases relating to apprehension of breach of the peace are generally determined

for disposal on the strength of Police report. When the complaint came up before the sai l Police Officer, he made a very clever move in that he suggested that both the parties, Maulvi Muhammad Hussain and the Promised Messiah should be bound down to keep the peace as the fear of breach of peace was mutual. His object was that such a procedure would impress the Magistrate about his impartiality and he would accord his sanction without delay. The Police Officer boastfully said in a gathering "so far the Mirza has been safe but now he will see my hand." Some one reported this talk to the Promised Messiah. With a glance at the reporter, the Promised Messiah instantly observed, 'What does he think ? His Own hand would be cut off". Soon God manifested His own Power. Not only was the Promised Messiah acquitted honourably in the case but Sheikh Muhammad Bakhsh, Police Sub Inspector, died soon after, after suffering tortuous pain due to a malignant tumour in his hand. A further success that the Promised Messiah won in this connection was the entry of Sheikh Muhammad Bakhsh's only son in the fold of the Ahmadiyya Community. He is a very devoted member of the brotherhood and his wife and children are likewise good Ahmadis.

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Fervent Prayers of the Promised Messiah

Eighteen years had passed since the Promised Messiah announced his claims. Ten years had gone by since he had initiated enrolment of community in the term of the *bait-pact*. Though the community had by the grace of God made good progress and thousands had joined the ranks but the storm of opposition had been growing in intensity simultaneouly. The Muslim Ulema and their co-workers had kindled a huge conflagration against him. They were intent on a two-pronged mischief. On the one hand they incited officials by means of malicious reports with the object of creating misgivings about his mission, his claim to the office of Mehdi being used as a pretext to promote the idea that he and his community were covertly engaged in a subversive compaign against the government. On the other hand,

they were preventing the masses from him by denouncing him as heretic and anti-Christ and had created among the public the fear that they would become heretics and accurssed if they had anything to do with his writings. In a word, opposition reached its height during this period and slander and scurrility knew no bounds. Such filthy and inflamatory posters and pamphlets were issued denouncing the Promised Messiah that no decent person could bear up with their contents. A dangerous feeling of hostility against the community pervaded the temper of the masses. Under these circumstances the Promised Messiah had the feeling that the pace of the community's progress was not as fast as he wished it to be. This feeling caused him grave and convulsive agony and in this mood of anguish he looked to God, absorbed in constant prayer for an extraordinary sign from Him—a sign that would bend the people's hearts to Him. Truly the year 1899 was the period of crucial agony in this behalf. The Posters and other publications of the period give a glimmering of this anguish of the Promised Messiah. For the benefit of my readers I propose to quote some pertinent lines to give them side glance into the state of his feelings. He says :

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> "O my Excellent Lord of Majesty Mighty, Holy, Living and life-sustaining God who has been ever supporting the righteous. Blessed is Thy Name eternally. The works of Thy might can never be put off. Thy Powerful Hand ever shows marvellous deeds. Thou alone didst appoint me at the beginning of the 14th century. But O lord of might Thou knowest that most of men did not accept me and took me as an impostor and called me heretic, liar and anti-Christ. I have been maligned and been tormented with various painful words. Therefore O my Powerful Lord, now show me the way and show a sign by means of which Thy pure-natured servants may most firmly believe that I am Thy

chosen—a sign that may reinforce their faith and by means of which they may know Thee and Thy majesty may glitter thereby and the light of Thy Name may show itself like a lightning that crosses in a moment from the east to the west and shows its flashes in the north and south. Behold ! My soul is soaring to Thee, with sense of utmost trustfulness like a bird that makes for his nest. I am therefore desirous of the sign of Thy Power ; but not for myself nor for my own honour but that people may recognise Thee and take to Thy holy ways. I know Thee, Thou art my God, therefore my soul leaps at Thy name as an infant leaps at the sight of his mother. But most of the people did not know me and did not accept me. Therefore my soul and not I insisted that I should render the petition that if I am righteous in Thy sight, show another sign for me and give another testimony for this servant who has been crushed by tongues. Behold ! I raise hands in Thy presence humbly beseeching Thee to do as I beg. I extend both hands like the Prophet Noah and say O Lord 'I am overwhelmed' but without adding 'help me therefore'.....and my soul espies that God will hear me'.

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He assigned a period of three years for the acceptance of the above prayer - he prayed to God to graciously show a sign in his favour within three years, a sign that should draw the people to him. Similarly he wrote a poem in persian comprising a pathetic prayer. He observes as follows :

"O Mighty Lord and O Creator of earth and heaven ! O Compassionate and Gracious guide ! O Thou Who seest ! O Thou from Whom nothing is hidden ! If Thou seest me full of abomination and wickdness if Thou hast found me evil-natured. Into pieces break me an evil-doer and gladden this group of opponents. Let clouds of mercies rain on their hearts ! Fulfil all their wishes

by Thy grace ! Rain fire on my portal and my walls. Be my enmy and disrupt my affairs. But if Thou hast found me among Thy servants. If Thou hast seen that Thy Porch is my only turning-point.

If Thou hast seen in my heart that love the secret of which Thou hast hidden from the world.

Deal by me by Love therefore. Reveal a little of that secret O Thou who comest to every seeker.

Who knowest the fire of every one who is consumed. By the close contacts I had with Thee. By the affections that I sowed in my heart.

Come out in person to deliver, O Thou who art my refuge and my heaven and my resort.

The fire that Thou hast lighted in my heart. By the flames whereof thou hast burnt all excepting Thee. By that fire light up my face. And change this black night of mine into day".

God manifested many signs thereafter. But this prayer found its principal acceptance in the outburst of plague which spread havoc in 1902 and gave meteoric progress to the community when people started joining the Jamaat in legions.

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Passing away of Mubarak Ahmad

In the year 1899 Mubrak Ahmad, the last son of the Promised Messiah was born. He had three sons from his second wife— the eldest was Hazrat Mirza Ba hirud din Mahmud Ahmad (born in 1899 became the Khalifa and head of the community in 914), his second son Mirza Bashir Ahmad, the writer of this book (born in 1893) and the third was Sahibzada Mirza Sharif Ahmad (born 1895). As has been stated above the Promised Messiah has claimed that all these children had been promised to him through divine words revealed to him in advance of the birth of each

child. On the eve of the birth of Mubrak Ahmad in 1899, he received the divine word that a baby-boy was coming to him from heaven and shall be lifted back to heaven. The Promised Messiah concluded from this that the boy would have an extraordinary potential for being pious, virtuous and excellence in spiritual insight and that he would die in his childhood. It turned out to be as he believed and this boy passed away during the life-time of the Promised Messiah in 1907.

The Promised Messiah had the warmest affection for his children. Mubarak Ahmad being the youngest naturally enjoyed a greater share of affection of the father than other children. His death was therefore a grievous blow to the Promised Messiah but since he was wholly attached to God, he set in this grief a perfect example of patience and resignation and counselled others the same. Those who had called to offer condolences relate that the Promised Messiah addressed them in such a way that it appeard that it was they who had been afflicted and he was consoling them. He wrote a few lines to be engraved on the tablet placed on the tomb of Mubarak Ahmad. They are a true picture of his feelings at the time. Two verses are reproduced below :-

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> "A part of my heart, Mubarak Ahmad, who was comely in appearance and comely in his traits departed from us making our heart grievously sad. He was of eight years and some months, when God summoned him. The Caller is the dearest of all to me. O heart therefore, sacrifice this life for Him."

Challenge to the Bishop of Lahore

In 1900, Dr. Lefroy, Bishop of Lahore and leader of the Punjab Christians who was a great believer in aggressive policies against rival religions challenged the Muslims to prove the innocence of the Holy Prophet in a comparison with Jesus.

The Promised Messiah was ever on the lookout for such opportunities. He readily accepted the Bishop's challenge and through a poster expressed his delight that a person of the status of the Bishop had shown a disposition to go into a research of of that kind. The Promised Messiah, however simultaneously explained that the idea of innocence besides being misleading comprised a very limited content, for he said, there could be first of all wide difference in the conception of innocence as understood by different peoples as, for instance, a certain act may be sinful according to one people and yet an act of virtue according to another. What would then be the criterion to determine which of the two, the Holy Prophet or Jesus, was more innocent, asked the Promised Messiah. He observed further that innocence has a field for real display only when there is the potential for sinfulness and that if a particular person lacked the basic potential for a particular type of sin, or injustice or misbehaviour, he could not be reckoned as innocent or praiseworthy for abstention for such an act. It was therefore not easy to determine true innocence on this ground said the Promised Messiah and that innocence itself was a negative virtue of a limited character and he said that True excell nce, consisted in a man's posititive qualities of a high level. He declared that he could p ove that in real innocence the Messiah could not touch the toe of the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) but that such a discussion could be of no great benefit to the world and that if the Bishop of Lahore had a real hankering after truth, he should enter with him into a discussion on the comparative merits of the Messiah and the Holy Founder of Islam and that therefore, the subject for argument should be which of these two prophets excelled the other in points of personal faith and character and blessings, and influence in theory and practice, and knowledge and certitude and holiness and in culture. He required of the Bishop to appraise him of his reactions so that

a representative of his could meet with the Bishop on the appointed date. This was followed by a number of letters written by the members of the community at his instance to the Bishop inviting him again and again to ccept the challenge. Some leading papers like the 'Pioneer' of Allahabad made forceful appeals to the Bishop to enter into the proposed discussion. But he refused on the trivial and flimsy ground that he could not enter the lists against the Mirza Sahib as he had claimed to be the Messiah which was according to him an affront to his Lord Jesus. Thus was lost a good oppourunity for a comparative appraisal of Islam and Christianity, though the sensible section of the people knew where the truth lay.

The Promised Messiah however did not leave unanswered the challenge of the Bishop of Lahore on the subject of the innocence of Prophets. In a series of articles on the subject published in the "Review of Religions", he humbled all contemporary faiths and while proving that all the Prophets are innocent and are saved by god's grace from commission of sin for they have to be exemplars to the world, true innocence was however the outstanding sterling virtue of the Holy Prophet of Islam alone (peace and blessings of Allah be on him)—Allah the Supreme Lord granted him a term during the course of which he passed through every phase of life and had occasion to exercise every natural quality; he became a ruler and was also a subject; he was a friend and a foe too; he was a son and then a father as well; he was a husband, a son-in-law a general, a statesman; he was poor and become rich too; he was a conqueror, a contracting party, an ally, a labourer and a lord, a creditor and a debtor, a lover as well as a beloved. In short he traversed every field of moral behaviour and gave an exhibition of the excellence of example which has no parallel anywhere in the history of mankind. Against such a grand and heart-captivating personality Jesus Christ of Nazareth or for that matter anyone else who had been granted a very limited

experience of life, stood no comparison, as they could hardly g ve the world anything better than a sketchy idea of a few elementary teachings. Their purity of character was no more than the pretensions of a goat to peaceableness and its abstention from tearing and devouring other animals and causing harm to sheep and lions. In the course of these articles the Promis'd Messiah obse ved that the use of the word ذنب (zanb) or استغفار (Istighfar) occurring in the Holy Quran or the Hadis about the Holy Prophet (peace and bles ings of All h be on him) did not go against the idea of his imm.cu'ateness. On the contrary it enhanced the glory of his excell:nce and his perfection as the word *Zanb* did not carry the ense of sin in Arabic language nor did it mean rebellion which expression were covered by اثم (*ithm*) جرم (*jurm*) and فسق (*fisq*) and the word ذلب used only for such human frailty as was inherent in his very constitution; as for instance the limitedness of his knowledge or of his powers or his age. The prayers that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) offered in his respect of his استغفار (Istighfar) therefore or the word of Allah that he had covered his ذاب (zanb) relate to these limitation to which every human being is subject. In other words the Istighfar of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) was something to the effect that he was wholly devoted to the service of His faith so much so that he had put his own life in jeopardy but that he confessed to his being a frail human being and that fearing that his human effort might carry in it some shortcoming he therefore sought the merciful hand of God to make it up through His own grace and let not his human frailties stand in the way of the progress of the faith. And God in response gave His word that He would cover up the shortcomings of his human effort with His own support and grace. The so-called sinfulness which is ascribed to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) is in fact an argument besepaking his grandeur and excellence. As against this despite his claims to divinity and to being above human weaknesses, Jesus Christ forbids in clear

words that he should not be called good and and that only the One God in heaven was worthy of being called Good. Further we find Satan getting bold enough to put him to trials again and again. It would be sheer ignorance and strong headedness of the worst degree to still think that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) was sinful and Jesus Christ was immaculate.

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The Revealed Sermon

In the beginning of 1900 a great miracle of knowledge was manifested through the Promised Messiah. On the day of the Idul Azha, God commanded him to give an address in Arabic and promised to grant him His support and guidance. In spite of the fact that he had never before spoken in Arabic, he delivered an exceedingly fine and long sermon on the subject of sacrifice with his eyes half closed and his face flushed, he delivered the speech with great fluency. He had instructed the scribes to enquire of him straight if and when they failed to catch a word as he was not sure if he would be able to recollect all that afterwards. This sermon was published later in book form and is entitled Khutaba-i-Ilhamiya (الخطبة الهامية). The first 38 pages of the book are 'revealed' and the rest were added later by the Promised Messiah. A reader would at one glance find that the speech is an excellent specimen of great eloquence and is in points of rhetoric, originality of content and fineness of diction a marvellous contribution. He used to say later that while he was delivering the speech written words would appear before his eyes of a sudden and that he felt at the time that he was like a dead man in the powerful hands of God who held his tongue under His complete control.

Edict about Jehad

It has already been stated that the Promised Messiah believed from the outset that his mission was one of peace and love and that he did not believe in a warrior-Mahdi nor did

he regard compulsion and force permissible in the matter of faith. In the year 1900 he declared through an edict that The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) was forced to have recourse to sword by the aggressiveness of the enemy but the conditions prevailing in the contemporary period were not such and that on the contrary there existed in the country a peaceful and established government which had granted every sort of religious freedom and that therefore the use of sword at the time for religious cause was an un-Islamic and unholy act. He said that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) had laid down that the Promised Messiah would abolish (Jazia) Pool-tax and, war, meaning thereby that the Promised Messiah's term would be one of peace and therefore there would be no need for sword as Islam would be spread by means of arguments and reasoned appeal. He says in this connection :

> "It was stated in *Ahadis* before that when the Messiah comes, religious wars would be declared unlawful. Now henceforward whoever takes up sword for the cause of faith and kills disbelievers styling himself a ghazee, he is disobedient to God and His Prophet. After my advent there is no more an armed holy war. We have hoisted the white standard of peace and love. There is now only one way for the call to the way of God. Therefore the way to which the foolish have objected, the wisdom and approval of God are not for having recourse to it again. The Promised Messiah therefore commands his army to retreat from this prohibited position. One who resists evil with evil is not of us. Save yourself from the attack of the wicked but fight not back with wickedness."

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Ahmadi Title of Jamaat

In the forthcoming year 1901, census was proposed to be taken in hand. This was the first census so for as the community was concerned and it was necessary to give it a name

that could distinguish it from other Islamic sects. The Promised Messiah issued a poster on the subject in the year 1902 proclaiming that henceforward the Jamaat found by him would be called the Ahmadi Firqa of Muslims that his followers should be listed as Ahmadi Muslim in the forthcoming census. His Jamaat has accordingly been called Ahmadi Muslims. But it is a matter of regret and it is considerably painful to note that even in this matter of a minor importance, the opponents furnished evidence of great self-degradation, instead of calling the Jamaat by the name it has chosen for itself they mention it as "Mirzais" or "Qadianis". It does us little harm but does not convey a good impression of the social morality of our opponents.

The Promised Messiah giving his reasons for naming his community the Jamaat Ahmadiyya stated that it was apparent from the Holy Quran and the Ahadis that the Holy Prophet would be granted two manifestations—one of majesty which took place through his own august person under the name Muhammad and the other one of beauty which was destined to take place through a reflection of his own under the name Ahmad. He stated that this reflection being himself, he had therefore under Divine approval, named the community the Jamaat Ahmadiyya.

Causes of the progress of the Jamaat

It has been stated above that forty persons took the oath of allegiance on the first day of the inition at Ludhiana. It happened in March 1889. Nearly all the forty were those who had been under his influence and early convinced of his righteousness and spiritual greatness. The initiative had been continuing since till the lists prepared by the Promised Messiah in the end of 1896 carried 313 names of important members. With few exceptions the list did not cover the names of women and children. Nor unknown members of the Jamaat were included in it. The total number of his followers including all ranks and age-groups was between 1500 and 2000 by the end of the year 1896.

This was a period of great hardship for the community and is comparable to a steep and razor blade incline. No doubt the pace of the Jamaat's progress has never been still but at this period when it was pitted against severe opposition on all sides, its progress was so slow that the enemy hopefully waited for its early collapse. This was a period of grave apprehension and distress for the Promised Messiah as well. The snail - pace progress of the community was a convulsing experience for his fast moving soul. But he knew that it is the case with every reformer and that there was no escape from such hard trials as it is necessary for the solidification and faith of the community. He did not lose heart and his progress grew apace with irrevocable and decisive gains till between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries his followers according to his estimate numbered some 30,000. Considering that the Movement was yet in its incipient stage, this was a very large number indeed but considering the end and objectives and aims of the Movement, it was a mere fraction. His mission was therefore towering above like a lofty mountain. True that a prophet's work is confined to sowing but even sowing takes its time. Again which gardner wouldn't love to see the early blossoms of part of the seedling he had planted. No doubt a reformer's work has no selfishness in the and he sees the prosperity that would follow his passing away as the prosperity taking veritable shape before his own eyes, he is still a human being and his heart is never devoid of the wish to have a glimpse of the future grandeur. No doubt he sees the dust covered seed as a grown up tree but his heart is not above the human desire to see that seed shoot out of soil. These were the sentiments that had taken hold of the heart and mind of the Promised Messiah who felt like rider of a chained steed restlessly seeking to break loose. God through His grace granted him a glimmering of light when his Jamaat was not able to take on wings but was well on the way to speedy progress. But that discussion can be deferred to a latter stage and there is no hurry to proceed with anon.

There were different causes for the progress so far made by the Movement. Of these we propose to deal with some briefly here :

The first and the foremost cause was the personality of the Promised Messiah, God had granted him a personal magnetism that would attract at once a nature endowed with a measure of affinity. This quality is however not peculiar to the Promised Messiah alone, infact a great cause of every prophet's success is his personal influence though it is true that there is a difference in degree in each some having less and others more. But in the case of the Promised Meseiah this quality of personal magnetism had reached its perfection as was in his leader the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). In this connection the Promised Messiah has observed in respect of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him).

اگر خواهی دلیلے عاشق باش - محمد هست برهان محمد

"O Seeker after truth,, if thou seekest an argument for the truthfulness of the Prophet Muhammad, then fall in love with him, for Muhammad is his own argument".

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This very argument applies with equal force and truth to the Promised Messiah himself. There are hundreds and thousand of persons who accepted the Promised Messiah on sight without asking for an argumement and said unhesitatingly that "this is not the face of an impostor". There are hundreds and thousand who associated with him for a few days and then were ever after spell bound regarding his service as the highest honour. In short a great cause of his success was his own person and his moral and spiritual influence. It is true that many men met him and associated with him and yet believed in him not but that was not due to any of his fault. It was their own fault. For even the biggest piece of magnet cannot attract a clod of mud. Such earthly souls are to be found during the period of every Prophet and their magnetic

power does not suffer thereby. The Promised Messiah was conscious of this Divine gift. He would often call upon his opponents to abandon opposition for a while and bide by him for some time as he hoped that Allah would surely open a way for them. Some people termed his personal charm as magic and warned the public against visiting him lest they should become spell bound. But was it magic? On the contrary it was magnetic force of his spiritual excellence which drew to him whole-some natures. Beside his spiritual influence, his manners and ways were so charming that those who came in contact with him were soon won over.

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The second great cause of his success was the great body of signs and miracles that God had granted him. Their influence was in no manner less than a magnetic force. These signs were of different kinds:

(a) The first kind of signs consisted of prophecies that he made on basis of Divine knowledge. These bore idings about his friends and foes, about individuals as well as nations and came true in their own time, thus strengthening the faith of the people. His prophecies consisted of signs of knowledge and power, the two pillars on which rests the Dominion of God. His explanation relating to prophecies was that they did not shed that light which may be compared to mid day brightness. For, in that case faith would become fruitless and no one could merit any reward for such faith. He used to observe that miracles threw a light that was compareable to moonlight on a cloudy night whereby the observant could find the way but weak of sight were left with room for doubt. Thousands of his followers had seen the signs of his prophecies and accepted him.

(b) The other kind of signs consisted of prayers. He claimed that since God had appointed him for the reformation of mankind, He therefore gave special hearing to his prayers and granted them the favour of His acceptance. He, however, qualified his statement with the observation that it did not mean that all prayers were heard in all circumstances but that

God's dealing with men in this behalf was of a friendly nature, that He heard most of the prayers but at times He had His own way with him making him conform to His will to test the warmth and response of the man. To cut it short, thousands of people accepted the Promised Messiah through the acceptance of his prayers. It so happened many times that people would write to him in time of trouble and distress requesting the favour of his Prayers and would see that he was heard when aparently there seemed no chance of relief, or at times his enemies were punished as a consequence of his prayers.

(c) The third kind of signs is the general sort of support which is observed to be working in favour of the mission of the righteous. Many people accepted him on this account, They saw that he was alone and without any means and the whole country was up against him and yet God granted him victory in every field and his opponents were discomfited in spite of their numbers and all the means at their disposal. The Promised Messiah observes aptly: "God never favours with his support the wicked. He never lets down his good servants."

(d) The fourth kind of signs consisted of the many dreams that thousands of people had in favour of his credentials and believed in him thereby. During the time of the Promised Messiah people used to have such dreams very frequently and some time many had revlations as well testifying to the Divine origin of his claims. Even many opponents had such dreams, some of them gave up opposition and joined his service but others put up constructions on their dreams and stuck to hostility.

The third great cause of his success was that body of arguments and evidence which he cited in favour of his claim was based both on reason and on observation. These were so powerful weapons that no reasonable person could fail to be impressed by their weight. He reared a grand mansion on the basis of facts drawn from the Holy Quran, the *Ahadis*, references from other religions, from history and national arguments and

reinforced with God granted vision that onlookers were dumfounded and could not produce anything comparable to it. No doubt his opponents were not quiet ; they too had a mass of weak tradition, or double-meaning quotations and even Quranic verses twisted in their meaning and some sayings of virtuous predecessors. But this sand-hill was nothing in comparison with the towering castle of the Promised Messiah. People gifted with wisdom readily noted the difference.

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The fourth big cause of the Promised Messiah's progress was the attractive and beautiful picture of Islam which he had drawn and which captivated hearts. As against which the picture presented by the non-Ahmadi Ulema had no redeemidg feature. He not only washed off the centuries-old dust that had besmirched the face of Islam but brought out such pearls of purest water from the Quran that even the enemy had to concede the point that here was a captivating and heart-winning picture of the faith. This necessarily drew the people to him.

The fifth cause was the great compaign that he launched in the furtherance of the cause of Islam. His devoted service to Islam wrung admiration even from his foes that he was a great and peerless lover of the faith who had no other engagement but a constant devotion to the cause of Islam. Sensible people would pause and think that while he was a heretic in the eyes of the Ulema who reposed in deep slumber in utter disregard of the interests of Islam but he was wholly given to its cause utterly unmindful of his personal comforts. This drew to him many a healthy-minded person.

The sixth cause was that wholesome change that he had brought about among his followers. Everyone of them was a devotee of the faith. When people saw an irreligious type of person given to ridiculing the teaching of Islam on joining his following become pious, God-fearing and votary of faith and adopting them in practical life and seeking delight of his soul in the service of Islam, they felt at heart that such could not

be the fruits of a rotten tree.

These were the factors that worked in favour of the Promised Messiah. His opponents were at the same time not unarmed. For Satan had provided them with a goodly supply of munition. The chief causes of his opposition were :

(1) Many of the beliefs of the Promised Messiah were different from those held by his contemporary Muslims, as, for instance, his belief that Jesus had died and that instead of him one like him was to come as the Promised Messiah, that Messiah and Mahdi were the titles of one and the same person, his rejection of the belief in the appearance of a warrior-Mahdi and his ban on religious wars, his idea of the descent of angels and his views about anti-Christ etc. Because of these differences, the Muslim masses believed him to have deflected from Islam and treated him as an innovator and were therefore not prepared to give ear to his words.

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(2) The proclamation of the Muslim Ulema that he was a heretic and outside the pale of Islam was a great obstacle in the way of the massess.

(3) A further obstacle in the way of the people consisted in the shadowy element in some of the prophecies which serves as a test of faith and the conflict in his view and that of the Uiema in regard to the standards applicable to determine their fulfilment. His contention was that since the mercy of God overwhelmed His anger, threatened punishment was therefore averted by means of prayers and through seeking merciful forgiveness of the Lord and that is why the punitive prophecies are averted some time when the target-party gives up its stand through fear. He cited instances from the lives of other prophets in support of his view. His opponents

however held that whether the prophecy was of a punitive nature or carried a promise, it is always implemented in terms of its literal import.

(4) Enrolment in his Jamaat (Community) called for a life of sacrifice and pain for which the mass of contemporary Muslims and non-Muslims was not prepared.

(5) The natural prejudice which is felt against every reformation movement was also a potential factor working against his call.

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Because of these factors the Community's rate of progress was very slow in the beginning and the struggle looked very much like a tug-of-war. In spite of bitter opposition, the community was however inching its way forward and at every step it took its pace was growing faster in its progress to the summit of success. It was a strange spectacle. The forces of hostility were pulling the community down ; at times even heavenly trials would intervene to add to the darkness around and often their own weakness made the going heavy. Still they were making, inch by inch, for the height. Their mental state was compared to that of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) whose heart rose and sank alternately in his bosom when in the battle field of Badr where Islam and disbelief were locked in a life and death struggle, the Holy Prophet in the travail of pain prayed "O my Lord if this small group perished today then there will be none left to worship Thee on the face of the earth." Similarly was the heart of the Promised Messiah convulsing in hope and fear during this period when he looked to the Hand of God for merciful intervention. It is important to note here that the numerical strength of the community had reached 30,000 at this time and its membership was not confined to the Punjab alone. It was spread in many parts of India. There were community centres established in N.W.F.P. Province, in Kashmir, in U.P., in Bombay, Hyderabad Deccan, Madras, Behar and Bengal. The seed of the

Ahmadiyya Movement had been sown abrood too, in East Africa and in Arabia and in other countries where individual Ahmadis were to be found. This was largely due to the writings of the Promised Messiah. The evangelistic efforts of his devoted followers had also contributed to this expansion of the movement.

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The Wall Litigation

The opposition against the Promised Messiah had assumed big proportions: his opponents had also incited some of his relations to range themselves against him. They had been at loggerheads with him primarily on account of their irreligious and impious ways but the enemies of the Promised Messiah further whetted their hostility towards him. Mirza Imam Din and Mirza Nizam Din, two cousins of the Promised Messiah, took leading part in tormenting him. Notwithstanding this close relationship the two brothers harboured feelings of ferocious enmity towards the Promised Messiah and would not let go any opportunity of causing him harm. They had proprietory rights over Qadian and also their house was adjecent to that of the Promised Messiah. Thus they were veritably a pair of snakes in the sleeve. The Promised Messiah, on the contrary, never caused them any harm. In fact he lost no opportunity of doing them good and of treating them generously. Yet the hostility continued to grow till in the year 1900, these two brothers hit on a plan of causing grave hardship to the Promised Messiah and his followers. Forcibly and unjustly they built a wall across the way linking the house of the Promised Messiah and his mosque with the guest house thus blocking the passage. This mischievous step caused serious hardship to the local Ahmadiyya population. In order to meet with the Promised Messiah and in order to reach mosque they had to go a long winding way within the township and pass through areas inhabited by implacable enemies of the Movement. At last the Promised Messiah was forced to seek legal redress. This is the only time in his life when he became a complainant before a law-court. He was re-

luctant to take that position but he had to, as his attornry advised him that the passage in question being a private one, no other member of the family was entitled to seek legal redress. Allah gran'ed him victory in the case which dragged on for a long time. The wall was pulled down under orders of the court.

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The Promised Me-siah gave thanks to the Lord on this success. It did not occ.r to him that the defendant had to pay the costs. His attorney got the cecree executed without informing him. When the bailiff visited Qadian to realize the cost-money from the defendants the Promised Messiah was away in Gurdaspur. In his absence the bailiff demanded costs money of the defendants, Mirza Imam Din and Mirza Nizam Din. Since they had not adequate funds to meet the demand, the bailiff proceeded to sequester their preperty. Thereupon they despatched a messenger at night to Gurdaspur with a letter to the Promised Messiah requesting him to save them from this disgrace. On learning this development the Promised Messiah scolded his people for allowing the execution of the decree and wrote off the costs and went to the extent of expressing his regrets to the Mirza Fretheren for the trouble caused to them of which, he explained, he had no knowledge. This case had started in the year 1900 and was decided in the year 1901; the wall was demolished during the same year.

Pir Mehr Ali Shah in the Field

So far the hostility organized against against the Promised Messiah had been led partically by the Ulema section of the Muslims. Though the Mausleum-sitters and spiritual *Pirs* were generally in opposition, their hostility had not taken an organized or practical shape. At this period a leading member of this order - the famous *Pir* of Golra, District Rawalpindi-entered the lists against the Promised Messiah and tried to measure swords with him. He wrote two books against the Promised Messiah and made tall claims. At the same time levelling unsavoury

attacks against the Promised Messiah he invited him to take the field against him. Thinking that he bel nged to a new order and that perchance because of a stir among the section of Pirs, a useful movement might spring up among their followers, the Promised Messiah welcomed this opportunity and wrote two powerful books. Of these one was entitled *Tuhfai Golarwiya*. In this he made out an unanswerable case in favour of his claims to the office of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi with evidence deduced from the Holy Quran and the Hadis and reinforced with arguments that silenced all opposition. This work of the Promised Messiah is about the most comprehensive account of his claims and credentials.

The other book was named *Ijazul Masih*. It comprised a commentary in Arabic on the Surah Fatiha, the opening Chapter of the Holy Quran. It is a mounmental work in point of linguistic charm and spiritual elegance. Before compiling this work, the Promised Messiah challenged the Pir Sahib of Golra to likewise write a commentary of the Holy book as he claimed to have profound knowledge of the Quran and regarded himself a spiritual leader. By this means, he said, the people would know which of the parties had their hold on truth and righteousness and enjoyed the support of God. He fixed a time-limit of seventy days for this competition laying it down that the Pir Sahib and himself should bring forth their respetive thesis in 70 days' time. He allowed the Pir Sahib to seek assistance from his fellow Pirs and Maulvis if he so wished. The Promised Messiah published his commentary of the Surah Fatiha within the fixed 70 days (on Feb. 25, 1901) in spite of indisposition lasting nearly a month. The Pir Sahib and his comrades had nothing to offer. The Promised Messiah's work, as stated above, is a treasure-house of Quranic wisdom and an excellent specimen of literary value which has to be studied to be appreciated. An idea of its beauty can be had from the fact that two leading papers of Egypt, the Alminar and Alhilal paid tribute to its iiterary elegance; one of the papers going

so far as to say that a comparable attempt was not in the domain of possibility.

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Propagation of Islam in the West

The Promised Messiah had an ardent desire to propagate Islam in Christian countries. In fact one of the main objectives of his mission was to supplant the Cross and establish Islam in its place. He had the greatest abhorrance for polytheism and his soul was ever ill at ease at the sight of a vast part of mankind worshipping a frail human being who had no Divine attribute in him and nor had he ever claimed to be God. He wrote and also stated on many occasions that he had met Jesus in revelational (kashf) state many times and had once dined with him and on all these occasions he found him very meek and mild-tempered and heard him confess that he was a humble creature of God. In short the Promised Messiah was greatly concerned in the death of polytheistic creeds and worship of the dead and in the establishment of true unity and worship of One God. It was a painfully perturbing sight for him to witness that Jesus of Nazareth who had no divine attribute in him nor had he achieved any memorable success even as a prophet, should be installed on the pedestal of Divinity by people after his death. He blamed St. Paul who on entering the fold of Christianity changed its entire structure through this innovation. He took the grave responsibility of deifying a weak human being. The coming generations further strengthened his theory. The Promised Messiah used to say that there was great upheaval in the heaven against this great polytheistic belief and that his own appointment owed its origin to this heavenly movement. He predicted that the time of the fall of Cross was at hand and he confidently looked forward to the resurgence of belief in the Unity of God and His worship in the near future. He said that he was a mere instrument, the real battle being God's own whose hosts were in action against satanic ideologies. But he stressed that it was our duty to make a move parallel to that

heavenly move and make use of all the means He has so graciously placed at our disposal. Accordingly he kept himself engaged constantly through speech and by means of his pen in propagating the idea of Divine Unity and kept up an unceasing barrage against the structure of polythesim by means of posters and polemics, books and sermons and invited followers of Christianity and other faiths claiming to represent truth as against Islam to a spiritual test or to fight it out with him with rational argument or in terms of experimental faith. He proclaimed through a poster that since God had sent him for the good of all mankind, and had raised him to combat the world wide evil tendencies, He had endowed him with all the requisite powers adequate for the mission and as against that Jesus Chris had a limited mission and correspondingly limited powers. He challenged the padres to have a test if they had any doubts about it and see for themselves which of the two the Messiah of Nazareth or the Messiah of Muhammad excelled in spiritual calibre and the gift of signs. Elaborating the point, he said that belief based on bias was a t tally different matter and matter of individual faith, but, that, if the signs shown by the Messiah of Nazareth were critically examined and analysed, they would appear to be palpably far inferior to the signs Allah had been manifesting at his hands.

In short he was exceedingly active against the worship of Jesus. He had been granted glad tidings through dreams and revelation that Europe would sooner or later partake of the light he had brought. In order to achieve that end he started an English-language journal in 190[illegible] to carry on his compaign against Christianity and in advocacy of Islam in Western countries. Since he did not know English, he appointed Maulvi Muhammad Ali M,A. a youthful disciple who was well-versed in English to write editorial notes for the journal as directed by him.

Through the blessing of the Promised Messiah's guidance, the journal made astounding progress in a short time and made

its mark in the world of learning. Many scholars of Europe and America commented very favourably on its articles and recognised the vigour of its ideas. These articles were on a variety of subjects, on the miracles of Christ, on his spiritual influence, on his teachings, on crucifixion, on events following crucifixion, on Messiah's travels to India and on his death, on his supposed claim to Divinity, on Trinity and on Islam, its reality and truth, and on the Divine embassy and mission of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and on his spiritual magnetism, his success, his teachings and on his excellencies. Similarly there were articles on the teachings of comparative faiths and the journal was thus both in name and in fact "Review of Religions." Mr. Walker, Secretary of the All India Young Men Christian Association commented on it in the following words :

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"This journal is true to its name, for, it comprises a vast area of religion in its study and has covered a large ground of religious subjects".

Mr. A.R. Webb wrote from America :

"The articles of the journal are highly enlightening and contain profound commentaries of spiritual truths".

Count Tolstoy observed :

"The ideas of this journal are very weighty and very true".

Professor Houstama, Editor, the Encyclopaedea of Islam wrote :

"This is a very interesting publication".

The Review of Reviews (London) said :

"The people of Europe and America who are interested in the religion of Muhammad should study this journal".

Miss Hunt wrote from America :

"Every issue of this journal is extremely attractive and contradicts all the ideas that have been propagated by the so-called civilized nations of the world against Islam

in the present age."

In short the Review of Relgions took a worthy part under the guidance of the Promised Messiah in breaking the spell of the Cross and in waging a victorious war for Islam.

Plague Ravages the Country

Plague, as readers must be aware, is a contagious malady which spreads through germs carried by rats. When this breaks out in an epidemic form it looks like a huge conflagration that consumes thousands in the course of a singls day. It springs up under the laws of nature and generally has no spiritual causes working behind it. But as is the way with God sometimes, even diseases and epidemics of this sort serve as His means of spreading the missions of His prophets and as sign of their truth. In 1898, the Promised Messiah saw in a dream party of men planting black and ugly plants. On enquiring of them what the plants were, they told him that they were the plants of plague which they added would shortly break out in the country. He was also told that the outbreak of the plague was due to a spiritual cause—the irreligiousness of the people and their wretched state of morals.

Soon after the epidemic broke out in the Punjab. In the beginning its attack was not severe but gradually it grew in fierceness till in 1902 it assumed alarming proportions. During this period God revealed to him that the epidemic was a Divine sign and that God would distinguish thereby those who believed in him and those who rejected him. The revelation that was received by him to that affect was: "Thou and whoso is in the four walls of thy house and whoso is at one with thee with perfect obedience and true allegiance and true piety, all those shall be saved from the plague. And during these latter days this will be a sign of God so that He may distinguish between the peoples. But whoso does not follow thee fully, he is not of thine. Grieve not for them. Qadian will not be visited with devasteating plague. And all the people of this community

(Jamaat) however large their number shall remain comparatively safe from plague as against the opponents".

The Promised Messiah in elucidation of this revelation observed that God the Great will so manifest the prophecy as would leave no room for doubt for a seeker of truth and every fair-minded person would realize that God had dealt by this community in a miraculous manner; that his community will grow in numbers through the agency of the plague and will make extraordinary progress and that their progress would be a marvellous phenomenon in the eyes of the people. He further said that God's word that those inside the walls of his house shall remain immune from plague should not be understood to apply only to those who were within the four walls of his house of brick and mud but the term applied also to his spiritual house--that those who followed him unreservedly were as much safe from the epidemic as the inmates of his temporal home.

The plague then started to ravage with greater ferocity and there was so fast a devastation that the sight presented the spectacle of the Doom's day: thousands of villages were desolate; populous quarters of hundred of cities and towns were denuded of their dwellers and the desolation was so great in many places that there was left nobody to bury the dead who rotted on roads and in lands. This happened in 1902 and yet the epidemic continued to rage fiercer with short intervals. From 1903 to 1907 it was at its height.

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During this period the community grew in startling proportions. Sometimes daily more than 500 applications offering allegiance were received by the Promised Messiah. A whole world seemed to be scrambling in consternation to seek the mantle of God's Messiah. This extraordinary shift in public trend was not based on any superstition. It was clear to every fair minded person that there was the hidden hand of God directing the scourge who was distinguishing, as was His ancient way, between the believers and the non-believers. It is true that as was

foreshadowed in the original revelation stray cases happened among Ahmadis also. As it is also true that every conquering army suffers some casualties. But these stray cases were not even a fraction of the wholesale devastation with which the opponents of the Promised Messiah were faced. It was not a superstitious fear therefrom but clear evidence that drove the people to the Promised Messiah. For, they saw that there was no truer way of escape from the visitation than that of joining the service of God's Messiah. In short the Ahmadiyya Community made astounding progress during this period beating all past records. The Promised Messiah would often at the time comment on this popular trend with a smile to the effect that most of the members of his community were "plague converts" in the sense that when other arguments failed to impress them the impending threat of God's punishment brought them round.

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The second part of the prophecy was also fulfilled very clearly. Qadian was visited with plague and its attacks were considerably severe but as promised by Him God saved the town from a devastating outbreak which was in evidence in other villages and towns. Again in order to implement His sign God caused the plague to rage around the house of the Promised Messiah and many of his neighbours died. But not only no human inmate of his house caught plague, not even a rat suffered death during the whole of this period. By setting all the environment on fire, He showed that if any place was safe in the midst of this conflagration, it was none other then the house of the Promised Messiah which had been promised immunity. The plague served the cause of the Promised Messiah yet in another way. Many of his leading opponents caught the malady and became casualties. In 1902 the first year of the plague's rampant attack, Rusal Baba of Amritsar, a bitter enemy of the Movement succumbed to the disease. Similarly many others were gathered to their forefathers. Of these some were those who had made prophecies of their personal immunity like the Promised Messiah. But God picked them out and not one of them survived the epidemic. But we shall deal with this subject at a later stage.

(To be continued)

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